

The Principia.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1860.

"POLITICAL ETHICS"—THE INDEPENDENT.

We resume our discussion of the principles of *The Independent* as copied and commented upon, in our last number. Having tested its "political ethics" by the word of God and the doctrine of "orthodoxy," as we have seen in connection with the "principles" of Congregational Church Independency, after which, we will review its notions of official oaths, of perjury, of civil government, of self-governance, of usurpation, despotism, &c., &c.

Congregationalism, or Church-Independency, as held and practiced by certain Unitarian churches, has created religious protest against the authority of man, when it has set up against the authority of conscience, and of God. Without that element, Congregationalism becomes a mere dead conventional form. The official persecutors of the Puritans, sometimes acknowledging the unjust severity of the sanctions they enforced, enforced them in conformity with the official oaths of allegiance, which they dared not violate. The American Government too, has its persecuting edicts, for hunting down with official bloodhounds, the christian fugitives from heathenism, who are seeking homes where they can read the Bible, enjoy the parity of christian marriage, and save their daughters from lives of compulsory prostitution—a christian self-sacrificing, vastly more necessary to secure their christian liberties and purity, than the self-excommunication of the Puritan, pilgrims who landed at Plymouth from the May Flower—edicts too, which punish with fines and imprisonment, the christians who refuse to join in the pursuit and capture of their christian brethren and sisters, and their rendition into the hell of pollution and darkness from which they have escaped. Nay, more, edicts that punish christian men and women for merely opening their homes to christian fugitives from such oppression, and giving them food and shelter, instead of spurning or betraying them, of whom Christ says,—"Inasmuch as ye did it or ye did not, unto one of the least of these, my brethren and sisters, ye did it, or ye did it not unto me, adding: "And these," (who thus refuse succor) "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." It is "orthodoxy,"—it is in accordance with "Congregationalism," to believe and teach that "a good and true man" believing the edict to be "unjust, might nevertheless see good faith?" If he be, what becomes of the wide distinction between orthodoxy and heresy?—between Congregational Independency and a church-and-state prelatry over-riding the consciences of men, and forbidding the worship and service of the true God—the God of justice, mercy and truth, who accepts no worship from tyrants, who frame and execute unrighteous decrees? The high church officials of England, enforced acts of conformity in respect to rituals, forms of worship, gestures, gowns and ceremonies, of which they thought they could plausibly allege that they were innocent, and that non-conformity to them was owing to contumacy rather than to conscience. They never persecuted christian families and families, on account of their flight from adulterous and enforced pollution. They never punished with fines and imprisonments, the christian duties of hospitality, humanity, and mercy to the poor. Compared with the justification of American Presidents who enforce the Fugitive Slave Act, the clerical justification of King Charles, was but a venial mistake, though the crime of Charles, as the Puritans believed, justly brought him to the block.

But of "perjury as a qualification of the Presidency," what shall we say? We say, in the first place, that *The Independent's* "political ethics," strike deeper than this. It not only insists that the President having taken the oath to execute the laws must enforce the Fugitive Act, must do it, if he continues to hold the office, but that he might in "good faith" execute it rather than resign." Farther than even this. We understand that *The Independent* would have the President accept the office with the understanding that he should take an oath to execute the Fugitive Act, and then do it. And *The Independent*, unless we mistake its position encourages the people to vote for a Presidential candidate of that character, that he may do that fendish work as

their official servant, well knowing that it is a work of iniquity.

But, the point direct. Is the crime of "perjury" committed when a magistrate, having wickedly or irresponsibly taken an oath to execute an unjust statute, permits, and refuses to do so? Let?

The late Anti-Masonic controversy, we supposed, had settled the question of the "perjury" of breaking sworn oaths. Perhaps, however, it will be said that Masons were extra-judicial and therefore, less sworn and binding than official calls. Suppose, then, the National Convention, and its officers, entered the office, would that make its oaths, calls, binding? And would they not be broken in wicked "perjury"? The answer is, saying that a wicked oath binds no one, is as dirty and as bad as breaking it. If there is anything sacred about breaking it, such an oath? Once more find it would be as well to avoid oaths, and then then plead the sacred obligation of the oath to be justifiably, if its fulfillment? Would it be justifiably, if the sin of having taken such an oath, and being bound to do so, were removed? What say the *Independent's* "principles of political ethics" applicable to this question? What are the teachings of the divinity regarding such questions? From what text of Scripture—from what doctrine of Evangelical religion, has *The Independent* learned that an oath is allegiance to Satan, against the God of justice and mercy, may not be broken without "perjury"? Among all the noble army of martyrs, which of them has taught or exemplified such "political ethics?"

When forty men bound themselves by an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul, that they have been guilty of the crime of "perjury" if they had repented, and abandoned the enterprise? Will it be said that they were not bound by official oaths? But, suppose they had been, would that have altered the question? Would King Herod have been guilty of perjury, had he broken his oath, whether official, or unofficial, instead of beheading John the Baptist? If some modern teacher of religion, say, Rev. Dr. J. P. Thompson, or Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon, had lived in Judea, at that time, and had instructed Herod that he might fulfill his promise in good faith, while knowing it to be a major sin,—that he must break it, to avoid the guilt of perjury, how would the story look in the New-Testament record? And would the *Independent* think of it? The servants and the hosts of Pharaoh, who joined with him in oppressing the people, and who aided in his pursuit of the fugitives, for their re-capture, were doubtless bound to him, and to the execution of his edicts, by oaths of allegiance and obedience—but did that take away their sin, or shield them from punishment? Suppose they had believed—as doubtless they did believe—the mandate to be unjust—that conviction was a necessity of their moral natures, from which they could not escape, could that sense of the injustice of their conduct, transmute it into justice?

Some say that the guilt of wrong doing, is taken away by ignorance of the right, which might be true, if the ignorance were total and not wilful. The doctrine that a knowledge of the right makes amends for wrong doing, is a new heresy in ethics, wanting a name and a precedent.—But, further.

The oath to support the Constitution, is an oath to administer it for its declared objects, "to establish justice, and secure the blessings of liberty," and consequently it is an oath not to administer injustice nor support slavery. An oath to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," carries with it the obligation to understand and discern what is law. It is an oath to "take care" that usurpation and injustice, which are not law, shall not be executed. The President that executes the Fugitive Act, having taken this official oath, perjures himself before God. The very act of appealing to God the God of justice, in taking the oath, is an act recognizing the solemn obligation of doing nothing unjust, or offensive to God. What absurdity can exceed that of supposing that an appeal to God, promising to do justice, will make that injustice pleasing to him? So that if-justice justice, being "perjury" will offend him?

The oath we repeat it,—to administer law, is an oath to learn and know what is law. And the "principles" of law as taught by Moses and the prophets, by Jesus Christ and his apostles—as recognized by Cicero, Justinian, Fortescue,

Coke, Lytleton, Blackstone, and all competent christian jurists are identical with the "principles" of a just, just, equality, the law of nature the law of God. The just, just, may cry out against all this as an usurpation of power transferring the President to a dictator—just as though all the usurpations of tyrants, dictators did not stand in that very usurpation of jurisdiction or justice, for doing *The Independent* edicts. The blood of the Puritan martyrs and all of the Revolutionary heroes was shed in obedience and defense of the "principles" of official ethics. *The Independent* says:—"Happily, such victims have no successors in the sphere of political ethics as they have none in the sphere of religion." What kind of "politics" have "religion," as the sphere signifies, for students left the department of "religion," and the very men there, not all, Abner Tuck, assumed, and in the "religion" of "religion," not in the "religion" of "religion," but in the "religion" of "religion," the *Independent* is bound to be guided by the light of human developments, and not by religious dogmas. The conscience of the Puritan for an unrepented faith, and the rights of conscience, is the heart of the knowledge for civil and political liberty, will first be to be sought, not only, for such notions are to be followed, among a profane press and teachers of religion.

It would be an amazing task if it were not so, to trace the authorities of *The Independent* on this subject.

Where did it learn that the oath to execute the laws was an oath to execute "just" if not unconditional commitments? Is everything law, that can be run, with appliances of "log-rolling," by corrupt legislators, at Washington or Albany, through the will, of a legislative vote, and inscribed on the statute book?

What can be meant by the duty and wisdom of executing the very worst, the bloodiest, most despotic, the most impious of all the behests of the slave-power, "rather than resign the Government into the hands of the slave-power, or introduce anarchy and despotism." Is not the Government in the hands of the slave-power, already, if the Executive executes the very worst of all the behests of the slave-power, the Act for hunting and capturing its fugitive victims?

How is executing an act, though acknowledged to be unjust, "quite another thing" from executing it, under the belief or pretense of its justice? Did Herod indeed wash his hands in innocence, when he washed them in water, and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it"—yet, at the same time "give sentence that it should be as they required," and "delivered him to be crucified" [Compare Math. XXVII, 24, 26, with Luke XXIII, 24] Did his knowledge and confession of the right, make amends for his doing the wrong? By what article in the creed of "orthodoxy" are we taught this?

Under what "necessity" is a man to work wickedness, in consequence of his official position and oath?

How can such an one be said to "shrink from doing an act which he disapproves," while, at the same time, so far from "shrink from doing it" he does it, as a religious duty, in obedience to the dictates of wisdom?

If all that receives a majority vote of the two branches of a Legislature, and the President or Governor's signature, be therefore the law of what are Constitutions, and if Judges be to aside enactments that are unconstitutional? Of what use are consciences and Bibles, and the Spirit of all Truth, to guide Christian magistrates and citizens in the discharge of their public duties, if the Legislative vote, or the President, in opposition to the law of nature and the word of God, has authority to determine everything for them, without their deliberations?

Why, or for what useful purpose, have the people, in forming their Constitutions, separated, carefully the legislative, judicial and executive functions, if one of the departments has nothing to do but to execute the mandate of the other department, whether constitutional or unconstitutional, at their request or without? If one department of the Government is to play the automaton to the other, why not resolve all the departments into one? Of what use are attempted divisions and balances of power, to prevent one department from becoming an "absolute Dictator"—in the presence of "such notions," as *The Independent's*? If either one of the three departments may not interpose to shield the people from the "usurpation" of the other, why organize and support the three departments? Just so, if our

Family Miscellany.

The matter of the soul of man
Between myself and thee.

Family Miscellany.

MY MOTHER.

LOVE'S ANNIVERSARY.

One year ago this night, my love
One year ago we met—
How often since that last sweet time
The happy hours have met.

And counting's star has brought her out
New Lark's sweetest note
They have but could remember back
Of that one hour, that night.

No step has troubled the falling dew,
Glad hastening to my house.
No twilight sighs—poetive breathed
I come, my love, I come!

Yet bangs upon the closed window door,
Where I stand my dearest gaze,
I see thee stand—then quick advance,
Those unforgotten ways!

And now I breathe and thy hand
I am resting—'Tis of mine,
Lark's song captured glance and word,
Those low, sweet words of thine!

Yet fading, the bright vision still
And mournful voice speak,
Keep this, the only gift left
The vain again seek!

Ah! never shall stern life renew
The vision hope has given.
Joy's star shines through the deepening blue
Only above—in heaven.

E.

THE PLAYMATE.

BY JOHN H. WHITIER.

The place were dark on Ramoth's hill,
Their song was soft and low;
The blossoms in the sweet May wind
Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
The orchard birds sang clear,
The sweetest and the coldest day
It seemed of all the year.

For more to me than birds and flowers,
My playmate left her home,
And took with her the laughing spring,
The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of Kith and kin,
She laid her hand in mine;
We went about the world as merry boys
Who fed her father's swine!

She left us in the bloom of May;
The constant years told o'er,
Their seasons with her life were mourned,
But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
Of uneventful years—
Still o'er and o'er I know the spring
And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
Her summer roses bloom,
The dusky children of the sun
Before her come and go.

There haply with her jeweled tresses
She sits on her heron's gown—
No more the honey-suckle lay,
I think I walk alone.

The wild grapes wait as by the bank
The brown nuts on the hill,
And still the May-day may be made sweet
The words of Pollywilt.

The lilies bloom in the mead
The bird builds in the tree,
The dark pines sing in the forest hill
The dove song of the sea.

I wonder! she thinks of them,
And how she led them home—
If ever she places of Ramoth we'd
Are sounding in her dreams.

I see her face, I hear her voice;
Does she remember mine?
And wait—'tis in the eye
Who led her father's swine!

What secret she had the orchard build
For other eyes than ours,
That other hands with music fled,
And other lips with flowers!

O playmate in the golden time!
Our many seats are gone,
Its fragrance, its life, its bloom,
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with blossoms and fern,
A sweeter memory hold,
And there in spring the wren is singing
The song of our ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are mourning like the sea—

How many pleasant associations cluster around the name of Mother. Everything pure and holy seems entwined around the very word. Years may have passed since we went to visit; tall grass may be growing on her grave; yet with reverence would we cherish her memory. It seems but yesterday that we were children together, with a mother to counsel us and guide our feet in the path of duty. But she is gone, and we must finish our journey without her smile's gladness and play. To whom can we look with such confidence? To whom can we go with all our trials and troubles? Surely to our earthly friends. There is a vacancy which can never be filled. We may lose other friends, and their loss be made up of us, as a measure laid on earth is home without a mother there? If there is a measure on earth at which angels would weep, it is a group of friends just bereft of a mother's care. See them as they gather at night around the fire, where they were wont to receive their good-night kiss from her. When shall that mother's place! If spirits are permitted to hold communion with their friends on earth, it must be a mother will watch over her little ones she left behind. Her last prayer on earth is for the welfare of her children, and with faithful anguish does she bid them their last farewell as her spirits ascend to take its flight into the untrodden world. Thus for the sake of her who is gone, be kind to the motherless little ones! "For a mother, lost in childhood, gives the heart from day to day."

Or, even if her days be prolonged till the "evening of life," how hard it is then to give her up. That day, once earned, is now bent towards the grave, her hair is silvered o'er with age, her step is faltering, still we can hardly believe her growing old, or think we can ever part with her. But ere we are aware of it, she is gone forever from us. Yet these dark hands are folded peacefully across her breast; those eyes, whose delight it was to gaze at the flowers she loved so well, are closed in death. And now, as we visit the sacred mound, where, repose the remains of a dear mother, may we try to follow in her footsteps, to be guided by her example, we may then rest assured that when we are done with this world it will be well with us.

DOUBT FROM INACTIVITY.—We can not give the philosophy of it, but this is the fact—Christians who have nothing to do but to sit thinking of themselves, meditating, sentimentalizing, or mysticizing—are almost sure to become the prey of dark, black misgivings. Men struggling in the desert need no proof that Jesus is the Christ. John shut up, who became morbid and doubtful, immediately. The history of a human soul is marvelous. We are mysticists; but here is the history of it all—for sadness, for suffering, for misgiving, there is no remedy but stirring and doing.—*Robertson.*

How much truth there is in the above! Undoubtedly one of the causes why members of churches so often become cold and lifeless, and half-theistic, is that they live lives of idleness. They have never been aroused to their brother fellow man. Their love is for the world and the things in the world, and they turn aside with aversion from heavenly things. But if these same lifeless members could have their spirits purified with the true religion of our Savior—if they would work as he works, in fighting against the evil that is in the world, and in inaugurating a reign of righteousness here on earth—how soon would they be transformed into ever-wakeful, ever-living men?—*The World we live in.*

CHILDHOOD.—We could never have loved the earth so well, if we had had no childhood in it—if it were not the earth where the same flowers came up again every spring, that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat sipping to ourselves on the grass—the same birds and have seen the autumn hedge-rows—the same redheads that we used to call "God's birds," because they did no harm to the precious crops. What a pity it is with that sweet monotony where everything is known, and loved because it is known? The world I walk in, on this mild May day with the young yellow-brown foliage of the oaks between me and the blue sky the white star-flowers and the blue-eyed speedwell and the ground ivy at my feet—what grove of tropic palms, what

strong forest of splendid broad-petalled blossoms, and what their soft song and hushed foliage within us as this dream comes? These familiar flowers, these well-known birds, set not in the sky with its fifty bright ones, these furred woods and grassy fields, each with a sort of personality given out by the capricious ledge-rows—such things as these are the mother tongue of our imagination, the language that is spoken with all the subtle intellectual associations that the language of our childhood left behind them. Our delight in the new children on the deep-laid grass to day might be no more than the faint perception of warlike souls. If it were so, the same smile and the grass in far-off years, which we see in us and transform our perception into this—*The Mirror on the Floor.*

A NEW METHOD OF TESTING LIQUORS.—A gentleman recently asked us to the bar of a hotel and to a glass of brandy. The bar-keeper handed down a decanter containing a dark colored but undoubtedly full. The first gentleman who had called for the brandy glanced his eye over the apartment with a view to find some one who would drink with him—Observing a negro sitting near the door, he exclaimed, "Boy, will you take a glass of brandy with me?" "Thank-e, massa," was the reply, and the negro walked up, and swallow'd his glass, filled by the hand of his benevolent friend.

The bar-keeper set up the decanter, took the change for two glasses, and observing that his customer had not swallow'd the glass which had poured out for him, he inquired, "Are you not going to drink your liquor, sir?" "I am not decided, yet," was the reply: "you mix up such infernal compounds, does days, that it is unsafe for a man to drink until he has seen the liquors tested. If that negro lives fifteen minutes, I will venture to swallow my glass." The negro rose with an evident expression of anxiety on his dusky countenance, and sloped.—Whether the thirsty traveler ultimately drank his glass, I have not learned.—*Maine Temp. Journal.*

While reading the above, the imagination came over us that the white people of America are treating the Negro to the bitter draught of slavery, preparatory to drinking the cup to the dregs themselves. They have no idea, now, of drinking it. In this they differ from the customer of the hotel. But the difference argues nothing in their favor. More stupid than the patron of the rum-seller, it never occurs to them that the aristocracy they are fattening would as eagerly victimize them, as the negro, nor that the mixture that is death to the one, will prove equally fatal to the other. In the very act of testing the poison by its effect upon the Negro, they are sipping, with dough-faced servility, the same degrading beverage themselves, even voting not to invade the premises, nor disturb the vested rights of the destroyer!

This way of testing the quality of the deadly poison has been tried quite too long in this country, already.—*The Principle.*

A GOOD CUSTOM.—It is a law—or custom, which amounts to the same thing—with the Japanese, that every man is bound to leave on his grounds as many trees as he finds, and if he cuts one down, to plant another in its place. Hence, in Jeddo, the forest city, some groves cover acres, and were in the most perfect state of nature, while in other places, however thick the trees were planted, and dead shade they cast among them were to be seen next houses and the groves, and the most elegant shrubs dwarfed, and their branches trimmed like the most fastidious shades.

JOLENESS AND POVERTY.—To be idle and to be poor have always been reproaches, and therefore many among the poor with the utmost care to hide his poverty from others, and his idleness from himself.

When a man has been intemperate so long that shame no longer paints a blush upon his cheek, his liquor generally does it instead.

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